Introduction to Research – Primary Grades

(adapted from *The Big6 Goes Primary*!: Teaching information and communication technology skills in grades K-2 / Barbara Jansen (Linworth Publishing, 2009)

Introduce the Big6 process: Pick a topic

Step 1: What do we need to do?

* **Make list of things we KNOW about the topic.**
* **Start a KWHL (Know – Wonder – How – Learn) chart.**
  + **What do students already KNOW about the topic**
* Define the task: Describe a project (finished product) that requires some higher-level thinking skills. Ask students what questions they will need to ask to complete the project.
  + What do you WONDER about the topic?

**Step 2: What can we use to find what we need?**

* **Make a list of possible resources in the HOW column (brainstorm; books, internet, magazines, museums, videos, etc.)**
* **Circle the best resources (and the ones to which you have access) for the task.**

Step 3: Where can we find what we need?

* For really young students, the school librarian and teacher could pre-select resources.
  + Books can be pulled and placed on a cart or in baskets.
  + Websites or links to online encyclopedias can be bookmarked or links placed on a webpage for easy access.
  + Don’t forget possible newspaper or magazine articles (e.g., Weekly Reader, Scholastic News, Ranger Rick, Click, etc.) and put them in baskets, too.
  + Download or link to videos from United Streaming, BrainPOP, PebbleGo or other subscription services.

Step 4: What information can we use?

* As each source is engaged, use the “trash and treasure[[1]](#endnote-1)” note-taking method to identify important information in the source.
* Record keywords in the LEARNED column of the KWHL chart or some other graphic organizer.

Step 5: How can we show what we learned?

* Take all the keywords from the LEARNED column and write them on sticky notes or use Wallwisher (<http://www.wallwisher.com>) to post keywords on virtual sticky notes.
* Organize keywords into categories (i.e., if topic is an animal, topics might include habitat, description, diet, protection, caring for young, etc.). The keywords can be written in a graphic organizer.
* Students use keyword lists to create paragraphs.[[2]](#endnote-2)

Step 6: How will we know if we did well?

* Discuss possible ways of measuring success.
* Provide a simple rubric.[[3]](#endnote-3)

1. Trash and Treasure Note-taking (*Big6 Goes Primary*, p. 79-80)

   Read a paragraph. Make a slash mark at the end of the first sentence. Look at each word in the sentence. Is it an important word? If no, cross it out; if yes, circle it. Continue for each sentence. What you will be left with are keywords. Write the keywords on the KWHL chart. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Writing paragraphs: When I did this on my own with a class of students and limited time, I divided students into small working groups and let them (or assigned them) a category, making sure all were covered. I then cut chart paper into “sentence strips” with about 5 lines each. Students used the keywords for their category to first write sentences then organize the sentences into paragraphs.

   Students could further divide the keyword list for their category or the teacher could (grouping similar keywords together). For example, groundhogs eat mostly plant life or small animals, but will eat tree bark and roots if they get really hungry. One student might get a list of plants; another, a list of animals; and a third, the keywords about tree bark and roots.

   Each student writes one or two sentences using their keywords.

   As a group, they decided the order in which to place their sentences and then came up with a topic sentence for the whole ‘paragraph’.

   Finally, students could write the entire “report” using each group’s paragraphs. I really ran out of time for this, so we just lined up in the order in which the class thought the sentences should be read and each student read what they wrote. You could videotape the reading as the final product. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. I like to use a simple questionnaire with ☺ 😐 ☹ faces, asking kids if they did their best work, how easy or difficult it was to use the resources, if they worked well with others in their group, etc. Samples can be found in *The Big6 Goes Primary!* [↑](#endnote-ref-3)